This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-19 (Canceled).

20. (New) A method for treating an inorganic slurry to maintain the slurry in a substantially homogeneous phase and to preserve the slurry against bacterial contamination, which comprises the addition to the slurry of an effective amount of a composition comprising:

(a) a tetrakis(hydroxyorgano)phosphonium salt (herein THP^+ salt) selected from tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium sulphate, tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium chloride, tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium phosphate, tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium nitrate and tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium oxalate; and

(b) a dispersant selected from the group consisting of:

(i) phosphonated compounds containing at least one tertiary nitrogen atom; and

(ii) homopolymers of unsaturated acids.

21. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the THP^+ salt is tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium sulphate.

22. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the THP^+ salt is tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium chloride, phosphate, nitrate or oxalate.

23. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the dispersant (b(i)) is a phosphonated compound containing one tertiary nitrogen atom.

24. (New) A method according to Claim 4, in which the dispersant (b(i)) is a sodium salt of nitrilo-tris(methylene phosphonate).

25. (New) A method according to Claim 5, in which the salt is the tetra-sodium salt.

26. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the dispersant (b(ii)) is a homopolymer of acrylic acid.

27. (New) A method according to Claim 26, in which the homopolymer has a molecular weight in the range 2000 to 5000.

28. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the ratio of THP^+ salt to dispersant in the composition is about 2:1 (as active ingredients).

29. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the composition is added to the slurry in an amount in the range 10ppm to 1000ppm (by weight of the slurry).

30. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the composition is added to the slurry in an amount of about 750ppm (by weight of the slurry).

31. (New) A method, according to Claims 20, in which the slurry comprises a calcium carbonate-based slurry.

32. (New) A method according to Claim 20, in which the slurry comprises a pigment slurry, a clay slurry or a cement slurry.

33. (New) A composition for treating an inorganic slurry, the composition comprising:

(a) tetrakis(hydroxyorgano)phosphonium salt (herein THP^+ salt) selected from tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium sulphate,

tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium chloride,
tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium phosphate,
tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium nitrate and
tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium oxalate; and

(b) a dispersant which is the tetra sodium salt of nitrilo-tris (methylene phosphonate),

34. (New) A composition according to Claim 33, wherein the THP^+ salt is tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium sulphate.

35. (New) A method of treating an inorganic slurry to maintain the slurry in a substantially homogeneous phase and to preserve the slurry against bacterial contamination, comprising the addition to the slurry of an effective amount of a composition according to Claim 34.

36. (New) A composition for treating an inorganic slurry, the composition comprising:

(a) a tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium salt (herein THP^+ salt) selected from tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium sulphate, tetrakis (hydroxymethyl)phosphonium chloride, tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium phosphate, tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium nitrate and

tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium oxalate; and

(b) a dispersant which is a homopolymer of acrylic acid, the homopolymer having a molecular weight in the range of 2,000 to 5,000.

37. (New) A composition according to Claim 36, wherein the THP^+ salt is tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium sulphate.

38. (New) A method of treating an inorganic slurry to maintain the slurry in a substantially homogeneous phase and to preserve the slurry against bacterial contamination, comprising the addition to the slurry of an effective amount of a composition according to Claim 36.